

Message from the Executive Director

Fiscal year 2001 saw the retirement of the staff's leader who was also one of the Commission's first employees. On December 21, 2000, C.E. "Mel" Fisher announced that he was retiring after over eight years of service to the Commission. Mel was a defining force in the formative years of the Commission, serving as its Deputy Director of Enforcement from September 1993 to November 1997. Mel's national reputation in law enforcement, built during his tenure as superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, was critical to establishing a strict regulatory environment.

In November 1997, the Commission named him to succeed Executive Director Tom Irwin. Under his leadership, the Commission staff handled some of the most difficult and controversial issues in its short history. His unflappable style and no-nonsense demeanor were well suited to dealing with issues such as "boat in a moat" and the Station Casinos investigation.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Mel for his dedication, conscientiousness and work ethic. He has been an excellent mentor and a valuable public servant. We all owe him a great deal.

The Commission staff oversaw the opening of the state's 10th casino on July 25, 2001. Mark Twain Casino in LaGrange expects to draw customers primarily from the communities in Hannibal; Quincy, Illinois; and Keokuk and Fort Madison, Iowa. Thus, the primary markets draw heavily from Illinois and Iowa. The capital cost of the facility is approximately \$18 million and employs about 300 people.

One of the hallmarks of the Commission staff over the years has been its dedication to straightforward analysis of the facts in presenting recommendations to the Commission. Thus, it was gratifying to read the report by Special Assistant Attorney General Larry D. Hale that refuted allegations that the Commission and its staff acted improperly in its selection of Isle of Capri-Jefferson County. Among other things, the Hale Report found that:

- The selection process is not politically controlled. Indeed, it appears that the Commission's decision was contrary to the weight of political support, which was soundly in favor of the Lemay project. (Hale Report, pages 6 and 10).
- Hale found no evidence of misconduct on the part of the Gaming Commission or its staff in connection with the selection of IOC-JC. (Hale Report, page 9).
- The Commission based its actions upon the staff's analysis and not upon any favoritism. (Hale Report, page 9).
- Whether the applicant misled the Commission or its staff on the status of the permits and site access is for the Commission to determine when making its suitability finding prior to licensing. (Hale Report, page 11).

The staff is currently in the process of reviewing the Highway Patrol's investigation into the allega-



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tions that Isle of Capri-Jefferson County misled the Commission during the selection process. By the time you read this report, the staff will likely have presented its findings and recommendations to the Commission. Regardless of the eventual outcome, we can assure you the investigation was a thorough and impartial examination of the facts.

On page 16 of this report you will find an outline of the Commission's training program. The training program has been a point of emphasis during the past few years and is improving rapidly. We will continue to make improvements with the goal of having the best training in the country.

Our commitment to training is part of our vision to "be diligent in fulfilling our mission by fostering personal accountability, effective communication, teamwork and continuous learning." Our employees are our most valuable assets. We are committed to providing our employees the tools to improve their skills and make their jobs more enjoyable and rewarding. We look forward to working with you through the budget process to bring this vision to fruition.

On pages 31-34 you will find a detailed report on the status of the Commission's efforts to combat problem gambling and provide assistance to problem gamblers and their families. We are proud of Missouri's reputation as a world leader in the development of innovative problem gambling programs.

The Commission participates in several programs in coordination with the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling with the goal of improving awareness and informing problem gamblers where they can get help. As described in more detail later in this report, the awareness efforts are working.

A prime example is the treatment program. During the first few years of its existence, relatively few problem gamblers were utilizing the state's free treatment program. Recently, this has changed and in the first quarter of this year participants in the treatment program have increased by more than 117%. At this rate, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) will exhaust its funding for the program by mid-year. We will be working with DMH to obtain a supplemental appropriation for this important program. We hope we will have your cooperation in fully funding this important service.

We hope you find this year's annual report to be a valuable resource. The staff strives to improve on the report each year and we believe this year's effort is the best yet. Should you have any questions regarding any of the material in the report, please contact us.

Sincerely,



Kevin P. Mullally
Executive Director

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